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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/687,699	10/20/2003	Young-hoon Jeong	Q77117	2834

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EXAMINER
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LEE, TOMMY D

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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2625

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PAPER

**Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.**

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

<b>Office Action Summary</b>	<b>Application No.</b> 10/687,699	<b>Applicant(s)</b> JEONG, YOUNG-HOON	
	<b>Examiner</b> Thomas D. Lee	<b>Art Unit</b> 2625	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

#### Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

#### Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on \_\_\_\_.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

#### Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-23 is/are pending in the application.  
4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-23 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

#### Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

#### Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).  
a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- \* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

#### Attachment(s)

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)   | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)<br>Paper No(s)/Mail Date. ____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)  | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application                      |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)<br>Paper No(s)/Mail Date <u>5/9/05</u> . | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: ____  |

## **DETAILED ACTION**

### ***Priority***

1. Receipt is acknowledged of papers submitted under 35 U.S.C. 119(a)-(d), which papers have been placed of record in the file.

### ***Specification***

2. The lengthy specification has not been checked to the extent necessary to determine the presence of all possible minor errors. Applicant's cooperation is requested in correcting any errors of which applicant may become aware in the specification.

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102***

3. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

4. Claims 1-3, 12 and 13 rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 5,822,451 (Spaulding et al., hereinafter Spaulding).

Regarding claims 1-3, Spaulding discloses an apparatus for halftoning a color image comprising: an address generator that receives a pixel in an image intended for halftoning and generates an address corresponding to a position of the pixel in a mask memory storing mask threshold values for one color channel (column 4, lines 7-16); a mask generator that receives a respective stored mask threshold value corresponding to the address from the mask memory and generates a respective mask threshold value

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for each of a plurality of color channels (column 4, lines 16-22); and a comparison unit that sequentially receives the respective mask threshold value generated for each of the plurality of color channels and a pixel value in the image intended for halftoning, compares both values with each other, and outputs a bilevel value according to a predetermined rule (column 4, lines 22-30). The address generator comprises: a pixel position information storage unit that receives the pixel in the image intended for halftoning and stores the position of the pixel (multi-channel input color images 40A, 40B, 40C generate image column and row addresses  $x$  and  $y$ ); a mask memory that stores mask threshold values for each color channel generated according to a predetermined algorithm (optimized dither matrices 44A, 44B, 44C); and a mask address generator that sequentially receives information on the pixel position from the pixel position information storage unit and generates the address corresponding to the position in the mask memory, the pixel position information storage unit comprising an X-direction counter that counts X-coordinates of pixels, and a Y-direction counter that counts Y-coordinates of pixels (modulo operators 42A, 42B, 42C convert column and row addresses from multi-channel input images to dither matrix column and row addresses  $x_d$  and  $y_d$ ).

Regarding claims 12 and 13, Spaulding discloses a method for halftoning a color image comprising the steps of: (a) receiving a pixel in an image intended for halftoning and generating an address corresponding to a position of the pixel in a mask memory storing mask threshold values for one color channel (column 4, lines 7-16); (b) receiving a respective stored mask threshold value corresponding to the address from the mask

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memory and generating a respective mask threshold value for each of a plurality of color channels (column 4, lines 16-22); and (c) sequentially receiving the respective mask threshold value generated for each of the plurality of color channels and a pixel value in the image intended for halftoning, comparing both values with each other, and outputting a bilevel value according to a predetermined rule (column 4, lines 22-30).

The step (a) comprises the steps of: (a1) storing in advance the respective stored mask threshold value for one color channel generated according to a predetermined algorithm (optimized dither matrices 44A, 44B, 44C); (a2) receiving the pixel in the image intended for halftoning and storing the position of the pixel (multi-channel input color images 40A, 40B, 40C generate image column and row addresses  $x$  and  $y$ ); and (a3) sequentially receiving information on the pixel position stored in the step (a2) and generating the address of the respective stored mask threshold value in the mask memory corresponding to the position (modulo operators 42A, 42B, 42C convert column and row addresses from multi-channel input images to dither matrix column and row addresses  $x_d$  and  $y_d$ ).

5. Claims 9-11, 19-21 and 23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 5,768,411 (Shu et al., hereinafter Shu).

Regarding claims 9-11, Shu discloses an apparatus for generating a mask during halftoning comprising: a mask information input unit that receives mask information for one color channel generated by a predetermined algorithm (reference dither matrix (cyan) shown in Fig. 3A); an offset calculator that calculates a predetermined offset (fractions of pixel component value range determined (column 5, lines 33-47)); and a

mask calculator that calculates masks for a plurality of channels using information on the predetermined offset calculated by the offset calculator (magenta and yellow matrices generated by adding fractions of pixel component range to corresponding values of cyan matrix (column 5, lines 33-47)). The offset calculator calculates the predetermined offset by dividing a largest pixel value in an image intended for halftoning by a number of colors used for halftoning (magenta and yellow matrices generated by adding one-third and two thirds of the pixel component value range to corresponding elements of the cyan matrix (column 5, lines 41-47)). In order to generate the masks for the plurality of channels, the mask calculator receives a mask threshold value from the mask information input unit, adds the predetermined offset calculated by the offset calculator to the mask threshold value, and if a result value is greater than a largest pixel value, calculates a respective mask threshold value by subtracting the largest pixel value from the resulting value (noting Fig. 6, when the yellow threshold or the magenta threshold reaches a value corresponding to the pixel component value range, the threshold returns to zero).

Regarding claims 19-21 and 23, Shu discloses a method for generating mask during halftoning, and a computer-readable recording medium that records a program for executing a color image halftoning method on a computer (column 3, line 59 – column 4, line 2), the method comprising the steps of: (a) receiving mask information for one color channel generated by a predetermined algorithm (reference dither matrix (cyan) shown in Fig. 3A); (b) calculating a predetermined offset (fractions of pixel component value range determined (column 5, lines 33-47)); and (c) calculating masks

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for a plurality of channels using information on the predetermined offset calculated in the step (b) (magenta and yellow matrices generated by adding fractions of pixel component range to corresponding values of cyan matrix (column 5, lines 33-47)). In the step (b), the predetermined offset is calculated by dividing a largest pixel value in an image intended for halftoning by a number of colors used for the halftoning process (magenta and yellow matrices generated by adding one-third and two thirds of the pixel component value range to corresponding elements of the cyan matrix (column 5, lines 41-47)). In the step (c), masks are generated for the plurality of channels by receiving threshold values stored in a mask memory, adding the predetermined offset to each threshold value, and if a resulting value is greater than a largest pixel value, calculating a respective threshold value after subtracting the largest pixel value from the resulting value (noting Fig. 6, when the yellow threshold or the magenta threshold reaches a value corresponding to the pixel component value range, the threshold returns to zero).

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

6. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

7. Claim 22 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Spaulding.

Claim 22 recites the limitations of above-rejected claim 12, recorded on a computer-readable recording medium. While a computer-readable recording medium is

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not expressly disclosed in Spaulding, it is well known in the art to provide either an internal ROM or an external storage device, such as a CD-ROM, for providing instructions to a CPU, and such means are necessary for enabling the CPU to perform image processing. It would have been obvious for one of ordinary skill in the art to provide a storage device for storing program instructions in Spaulding, thereby enabling the CPU to perform the halftoning operation.

8. Claims 4, 5, 14 and 15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Spaulding as applied to claims 2 and 12 above, and further in view of U.S. Patent 6,154,195 (Young et al., hereinafter Young).

Regarding claims 4, 5, 14 and 15, Spaulding does not expressly disclose the use of an 8x8 Bayer Dither Table. Young discloses a method for performing dithering, using an arrangement similar to that of Spaulding (Fig. 5), and employing a Bayer dither matrix for halftoning image data (column 7, lines 53-67). It would have been obvious for one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the teaching of Spaulding by using a Bayer dither matrix, as disclosed in Young, so as to reduce banding artifacts to get smoother transitions between color gradients (column 7, lines 53-57). Young shows a 4x4 matrix (Fig. 4), but one of ordinary skill in the art would have recognized the size of the dither matrix used for halftoning image as a matter of design choice.

9. Claims 6-8 and 16-18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Spaulding as applied to claims 1 and 12 above, and further in view of Shu.

Claims 6-8 and 16-18 recite the limitations of above-rejected claims 9-11 and 19-21. These limitations, while not disclosed in Spaulding, is taught by Shu, as set forth



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above. Applying the dithering method of Shu to the teaching of Spaulding assures that dots of the different colors do not coincide with each other in light-colored regions, thereby providing a smoother appearance (Shu: column 4, line 60 – column 5, line 2; column 5, lines 33-47), and thus one of ordinary skill in the art would have been motivated to combine the teachings of Spaulding and Shu, by providing dither matrices such as taught by Shu in the teaching of Spaulding.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Thomas D. Lee whose telephone number is (571) 272-7436. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday, 7:30-5:00, alternate Fridays off.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Edward L. Coles can be reached on (571) 272-7402. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.



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Primary Examiner  
Technology Division 2625

tdl  
May 11, 2007